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NEA/ARP 188

JULY 20 1980

Dear Senator Biden:

In response to your letter of June 21 to President Carter concerning the Saudi Arabian request for F-15 accessory equipment, I am enclosing a copy of a letter from Secretary Muskie to Senator Byrd explaining the Administration's position on this subject.

Sincerely,

/s/

J. Brian Atwood
Assistant Secretary for
Congressional Relations

Enclosure:

Secretary Muskie's letter
to Senator Byrd.

The Honorable
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.,
United States Senate.

S/S 8014262

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H:APBurleigh

THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WASHINGTON

July 22, 1980

Dear Mr. Majority Leader:

I am replying to your letter of June 23 to President Carter concerning supplemental equipment for Saudi Arabian F-15 aircraft.

I can assure you that the Administration has not departed from the assurances given to the Congress by Secretary Brown in 1978 and that your views and those of the Congress would be taken fully into account in reviewing Saudi Arabian requests for such equipment.

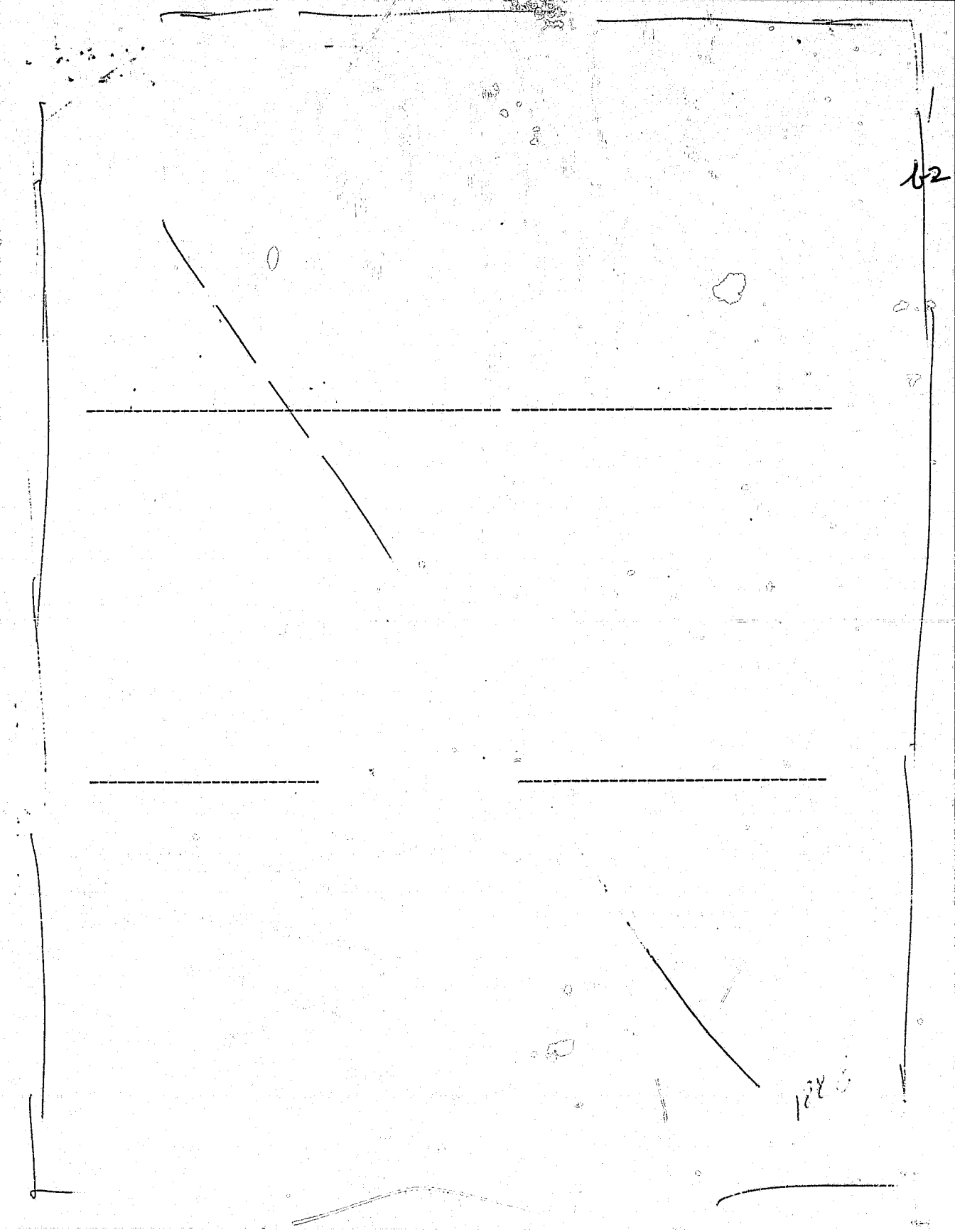
This is not a matter pending decision within the government and no decision on this issue would be made without full prior consultations with the Congress.

I hope this clarifies the situation so that there will be no misapprehensions as to the position of this Administration.

Sincerely,

Edmund S. Muskie

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd,
Majority Leader,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.



JOSEPH R. BIDEN, JR.
DELAWARE

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

June 21, 1980

Ack Fm/NSC
CONGRESSIONAL
LIAISON

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cc: Tate

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

I understand that the government of Saudi Arabia has requested that the U.S. sell them sophisticated military aircraft and related weapons systems. Among these items purportedly being requested are enhancements for the fleet of F-15s sold to Saudi Arabia in 1978, including conformal fuel tanks, multiple ejection racks and KC-135 aerial refueling tankers.

As you may remember, I introduced the Senate Resolution of Disapproval to the sale of F-15s to Saudi Arabia two years ago primarily on the grounds that these aircraft posed a significant threat to the security of Israel. Many of my colleagues' misgivings, at that time, were assuaged by the May 9, 1978 letter from the Secretary of Defense to the Foreign Relations Committee assuring them that:

> Saudi Arabia has not requested nor do we intend to sell any other systems or armaments that would increase the range or enhance the ground attack capability of the F-15.

Thus assured, the Senate did not disapprove the sale. It is my understanding, however, that the military equipment for the F-15 sought by the Saudis will do precisely what Secretary Brown assured the Senate that it would not.

While I am mindful of the need to maintain flexibility in our relations with foreign governments, the sale of this equipment for the F-15 would, in my view, be inconsistent with the Administration's position on United States security

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requirements in the Middle East. In view of your personal commitment to the stability of the region, I ask that you reaffirm the assurances given to the Senate by your Administration two years ago that the offensive capability of the F-15 would not be enhanced.

Sincerely,

JRB

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
United States Senator